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SUBJECT: CODEL ISKASON MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR GHAZI
SALAHUDIN AND FOREIGN MINISTER DENG ALOR

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Senators Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Bob Corker (R-TN) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, accompanied by CDA a.i. Asquino and emboffs, met with Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salahudin at the Ministry of Federal Rule in Khartoum on May 25. Later that afternoon, they met with Foreign Minister Deng Alor. Dr. Ghazi pushed for full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and urged that the international community advocate for the unity of Sudan. However, Alor, who belongs to the Government of National Unity (GNU) as a member of the south's Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), questioned how unity would be possible when the NCP, in his view, is such an unreliable partner. Senators Isakson and Corker urged full implementation of the agreement, as well as urgent discussions on what will happen after the CPA period to ensure a peaceful transition regardless of the outcome of the referendum. End summary.

DR. GHAZI: HELP US ADVOCATE FOR UNITY

¶2. (SBU) Dr. Ghazi told the Senators that the top bilateral priority for the Government of Sudan (GOS) is the removal of his country from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List, something that he said had been promised by U.S. officials many times in the past. Ghazi complained that previous U.S. administrations have gone back on promises to normalize relations with Sudan, which has led to the Sudanese people feeling that they are being treated unfairly. Senator Isakson responded that the U.S. is eager to see full CPA implementation as well as a resolution of the Darfur conflict, which will help the U.S. and Sudan normalize relations. To ensure that there is not a return to war, Senator Isakson urged that the CPA parties also focus on planning for the post-2011 period, regardless of what happens in the referendum.

¶3. (SBU) Dr. Ghazi described the referendum as "complicated," particularly the procedural aspects of the vote. He said the debate on the referendum by the two parties is over who will be allowed to cast their votes - all southerners or just those residing in the south. Dr. Ghazi observed that there is an internal dispute within the SPLM, with some of its members opposed to giving voting eligibility to southerners who reside in the north. He characterized this as an embarrassing situation for the SPLM, and added the latter will not likely want to be seen as denying voting privileges to southerners in the north. Dr. Ghazi noted that the GOS does not want to do anything that would encourage a unilateral secession, and that the international community should work toward focusing the south's attention on unity. However, he said the GOS will abide by the south's right to self-determination. Ghazi opined that the United States has the capacity to influence the south to remain part of Sudan, and that it would be a shame to allow the south to secede because its citizens are "angry." He declared that all who support the CPA must push for unity because if the south secedes, it would become a land-locked and potentially unstable

nation.

¶4. (SBU) Regarding the GoS's March 4-5 expulsion of 13 international NGOs, Dr. Ghazi assured the Senators that NGOs are coming back to Sudan. He praised U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan General Scott Gration's leadership on this issue. Ghazi noted that while 13 organizations were expelled, there are still nearly 70 other NGOs operating in Sudan. He said the GOS has implemented measures to facilitate the work of the NGOs, and that assets confiscated from the expelled NGOs will be transferred to the new NGOs. Senator Corker asked what made the GOS perceive the NGOs as a threat. Ghazi said that some of the NGOs - such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC) - had a political agenda. He alleged IRC had made it clear that it supported the International Criminal Court (ICC). He added that ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo had said on several occasions that he received information from the NGOs that was used in the March 4 indictment of President Beshir. Without providing any details to support his claim, Ghazi said the government had information that some of the NGOs were even involved in transporting witnesses to the ICC in The Hague. Ghazi concluded that such actions violated the principles of the country agreements that the organizations had signed in order to work in Sudan.

ALOR: HOW CAN WE TRUST THE NCP?

¶5. (SBU) Foreign Minister and SPLM member Deng Alor discussed roadblocks to implementation of the CPA and the long-term prospects for peace in Sudan. Alor told the Senators that CPA implementation had come a long way, but there were still critical road blocks, most notably the fact that the referendum, security, and media laws had not been passed, and that the census issue (how the data will be

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utilized, if at all) had not been resolved. Alor asked the U.S. to play a more active role in CPA implementation as there is little time (20 months) before the referendum. Barely hiding his disdain for the National Congress Party (NCP), which is the senior partner in the NCP-SPLM GNU, Alor said the NCP continues to use its superior resources to pay off SPLM members to disagree on policy and weaken the party. Alor said that active U.S. engagement would be helpful in moving the CPA forward and preventing crises. Senator Isakson observed that the U.S. and Sudan must establish a roadmap to improving the bilateral relationship, but should take small steps first. Isakson repeated his earlier statement to Dr. Ghazi that ensuring a peaceful referendum as well as an agreement for what will happen after the referendum will be critical.

¶6. (SBU) With regard to the Darfur peace process, Alor said that rebels need additional pressure to negotiate. He noted that many of the demands of the people of Darfur are well-known and easy for the government to accommodate. These include the proposal for one Darfur region with several states, a vice presidential position for a Darfuri in the GNU, and compensation for war victims and internally displaced people (IDPs). Alor said the SPLM has been discussing these issues with the NCP to try and reach a common position. Alor cautioned that if a solution to Darfur is not found soon, the IDP camps will become a breeding ground for continued violence, noting that the camps have become overly politicized. Alor said that the UN-African Union Hybrid Mission to Darfur (UNAMID) could use its forces to contribute to improving security. However, this would be possible only if the rules of engagement change so that UNAMID is more aggressive in protecting IDPs and other civilians.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: The views of these two senior GNU officials -one from the NCP and the other from the SPLM --illustrate clearly the divide between the two CPA partners. Both parties are looking forward to the June 23 CPA conference in Washington hosted by Special Envoy Gration as a way to demonstrate progress on implementation of the agreement. Neither side, though, has recently shown itself to be particularly creative in finding solutions on the intractable issues - such as border demarcation and the referendum law. Deeper discussions with both parties on the margins of the Washington conference might produce some results, as both the NCP and the SPLM are eager for deeper engagement by the U.S.

Election planning will be complicated by the fact that the NCP is not entirely confident it can win and fears a coalition against it. The SPLM has thus far been unable to agree on a strategy for the national elections. For that matter, it has still decided if it wants to run a candidate for the GNU presidency. SPLM head Salva Kiir cannot run for re-election as President of the Government of Southern Sudan and also be a candidate for the national presidency. However, having an SPLM candidate other than Kiir run for the national presidency (presumably one who lacks Kiir's prominence,) would be viewed as a sign of weakness by SPLM unionists (i.e. former followers of SPLM founder John Garang.) The issue could become divisive for the SPLM over time, unless it settles on a strategy soon. End comment.

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